

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-07 ISO-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05 ACDA-07 OES-07 COME-00
NASA-01 /060 W
-----058830 100259Z /72

R 092115Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3808
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
NAVOBSY WASHDC
AMCONSUL AUCKLAND
CINCPAC HONOLULU

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TPHY, NZ
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION CONCERNING PROPOSED
SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE TRANSIT CIRCLE

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: ON JULY 26, WARREN W. FREER,
OPPOSITON SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NEW ZEALAND
PARLIAMENT, SUBMITTED FOLLOWING WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE
GOVERNMENT: "IS IT INTENDED THAT THE OBSERVATORY WHICH
THE US NAVAL OBSERVATORY IS REPORTED TO BE PLANNING IN THE
SOUTH ISLAND AT EITHER BLACK BIRCH OR MOUNT JOHN SHOULD
HAVE A DEFENCE FUNCTION FOR NEW ZEALAND OR THE UNITED
STATES?"

2. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BRIAN TALBOYS RESPONDED
AUGUST 2 AS FOLLOWS: "BLACK BIRCH AND MOUNT JOHN ARE
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AMONG A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE SITES IN THE SOUTHERN HEMI-
SPHERE THAT ARE BEING CONSIDERED BY THE UNITED STATES
NAVAL OBSERVATORY FOR THE INSTALLATION AND OPERATION OF A
SEVEN-INCH ASTRONOMICAL TELESCOPE. OTHER SITES UNDER
CONSIDERATION ARE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AMERICA.
THE PRINCIPAL REQUIREMENTS ARE A HIGH NUMBER OF CLEAR
NIGHTS AND AS GREAT A DISTANCE AS POSSIBLE FROM THE

EQUATOR.

"TWO MEMBERS OF THE OBSERVATORY STAFF VISITED NEW ZEALAND IN APRIL AND MAY THIS YEAR FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CARTER OBSERVATORY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY, BUT NO OFFICIAL APPROACHES HAVE BEEN MADE YET TO THE GOVERNMENT.

"THE TELESCOPE WOULD BE USED IN A TEN-YEAR PROGRAMME TO BE CALLED OPERATION SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE TRANSIT CIRCLE, WHICH IT IS HOPED TO START ABOUT 1980. IT WOULD BE CONCERNED WITH FUNDAMENTAL GEODETIC AND ASTRONOMIC POSITIONING, AND WOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY UP TO 10 CIVILIAN PROFESSIONAL ASTRONOMERS FROM THE UNITED STATES, PROBABLY WITH SOME LOCAL ASSISTANCE. THE RESULTS WOULD BE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE AND WOULD BE USED TO IMPROVE THE ASTRONOMICAL DATA PUBLISHED IN THE NAUTICAL AND AIR ALMANACS. THESE ARE PRODUCED FOR USE IN NAVIGATION BY ALL MARINERS AND AIR NAVIGATORS, WHETHER MILITARY OR CIVILIAN." END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN LOU: GOVERNMENT REPLY IS BASED IN LARGE MEASURE ON INFORMATION PROVIDED MFA BY EMBASSY SCIENCE OFFICER. COPIES OF APRIL 21, 1977 LETTER FROM DR. JAMES HUGHES OF THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY TO DR. GARTH TURBOTT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY AND OF NOTES TAKEN IN APRIL DURING VISIT TO THE EMBASSY OF DR. CLAYTON SMITH AND MR. JAMES CHUN OF NAVAL OBSERVATORY WERE ALSO MADE AVAILABLE TO MFA. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE DIRECTOR OF THE CARTER OBSERVATORY HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH DR. HUGHES WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WILLINGNESS OF NEW ZEALAND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATE IN THE PROPOSED TRANSIT CIRCLE PROJECT. THE PARLIAMENTARY REPLY AS WRITTEN, WHILE INCOMPLETE IN DETAILS, REPRESENTS THE EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT STATE OF DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING POSSIBLE SITE LOCATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND OR ELSEWHERE IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE AND ENCOURAGE THE COOPERATION OF THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY IN KEEPING US INFORMED AS PROGRAM DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE.

4. THE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AND ANSWER WERE REPORTED IN THE MEDIA, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO PUBLIC REACTIONS, EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE. END LOU. SELDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASTRONOMICAL INSTRUMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770879/aaaacoxi.tel
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TAGS: TPHY, NZ, US
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